

THE BELIEVER NOT AN ORPHAN NO. 2990

**A SERMON
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"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."
John 14:18

YOU will notice that the margin reads, "I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you." In the absence of our Lord Jesus Christ, the disciples were like children deprived of their parents. During the three years in which He had been with them, He had solved all their difficulties, borne all their burdens, and supplied all their needs. Whenever a case was too hard or too heavy for them, they took it to Him. When their enemies well-nigh overcame them, Jesus came to the rescue, and turned the tide of battle. They were all happy and safe enough while the Master was with them, He walked in their midst like a father amid a large family of children, making all the household glad.

But now He was about to be taken from them by an ignominious death, and they might well feel that they would be like little children deprived of their natural and beloved protector. Our Savior knew the fear that was in their hearts, and before they could express it, He removed it by saying "You shall not be left alone in this wild and desert world, though I must be absent from you in the flesh, yet I will be present with you in a more efficacious manner, I will come to you spiritually, and you shall derive from My spiritual presence even more good than you could have had from My bodily presence, had I still continued in your midst."

I. First, here is AN EVIL AVERTED.

Without their Lord, believers would, apart from the Holy Spirit, be like other orphans, unhappy and desolate. Give them what you might, their loss could not have been recompensed. No number of lamps can make up for the sun's absence, blaze as they may, it is still night. No circle of friends can supply to a bereaved woman the loss of her husband, without him she is still a widow. Even thus, without Jesus, it is inevitable that the saints should be as orphans, but Jesus has promised in the text that we shall not be so, the one only thing that can remove the trial He declares shall be ours, "I will come to you."

Now remember, that *an orphan is one whose parent is dead*. This in itself is a great sorrow, if there were no other. The dear father, so well beloved, was suddenly smitten down with sickness, they watched him with anxiety, they nursed him with sedulous care, but he expired. The loving eye is closed in darkness for them. That active hand will no longer toil for the family. That heart and brain will no longer feel and think for them. Beneath the green grass the father sleeps, and every time the child surveys that hallowed hillock his heart swells with grief.

Beloved, we are not orphans in that sense, for our Lord Jesus is not dead. It is true that He died, for one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water, a sure evidence that the pericardium had been pierced, and that the fountain of life had been broken up. He died, 'tis certain, but He is not dead now. Go not to the grave to seek Him. Angel voices say, "He is not here, for he is risen." He could not be holden by the bands of death.

We do not worship a dead Christ, nor do we even think of Him now as a corpse. That picture on the wall, which the Romanists paint and worship, represents Christ as dead, but oh! it is so good to think of Christ as living, remaining in an existence real and true, none the less living because He died, but all the more truly full of life because He has passed through the portals of the grave, and is now reigning forever. See then, dear friends, the bitter root of the orphan's sorrow is gone from us, for our Jesus is not

dead now. No mausoleum enshrines His ashes, no pyramid embalms His body, no monument records the place of His permanent sepulcher.

The orphan has a sharp sorrow springing out of the death of his parent, namely, that *he is left alone*. He cannot now make appeals to the wisdom of the parent who could direct him. He cannot run, as once he did, when he was weary, to climb the parental knee. He cannot lean his aching head upon the parental bosom. “Father,” he may say, but no voice gives an answer. “Mother,” he may cry, but that fond title, which would awaken the mother if she slept, cannot arouse her from the bed of death. The child is alone, alone as to those two hearts which were its best companions. The parent and lover are gone. The little ones know what it is to be deserted and forsaken.

But we are not so, we are not orphans. It is true that Jesus is not here in body, but His spiritual presence is quite as blessed as His bodily presence would have been. Nay, it is better, for supposing Jesus Christ to be here in person, you could not all come and touch the hem of His garment—not all at once, at any rate. There might be thousands waiting all the world over to speak with Him, but how could they all reach Him if He were merely here in body? You might all be wanting to tell Him something, but in the body, He could only receive some one or two of you at a time.

But in spirit, there is no need for you to stir from the pew, no need to say a word, Jesus hears your thoughts talk, and attends to all your needs at the same moment. There is no need for us to press to get at Him because the throng is great, for He is as near to me as He is to you, and as near to you as to saints in America, or the islands of the Southern Sea. He is everywhere present, and all His beloved may talk with Him.

You can tell Him, at this moment, the sorrows which you dare not open up to anyone else. You will feel that in declaring them to Him, you have not breathed them to the air, but that a real person has heard you. One as real as though you could grip His hand, and could see the loving flash of His eye, and mark the sympathetic change of His countenance.

Is it not so with you, ye children of a living Savior? You know it is, you have a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother. You have a near and dear One, who, in the dead of the night is in the chamber, and in the heat and burden of the day is in the field of labor. You are not orphans, the “Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace,” is with you, your Lord is here, and as one whom his mother comforteth, so Jesus comforts you.

The orphan too, has *lost the kind hands which took care always that food and raiment should be provided, that the table should be well stored, and that the house should be kept in comfort*. Poor feeble one, who will provide for his wants? His father is dead, his mother is gone, who will take care of the little wanderer now? But it is not so with us. Jesus has not left us orphans, His care for His people is no less now than it was when He sat at the table with Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus, whom “Jesus loved.”

Instead of the provisions being less, they are even greater, for since the Holy Spirit has been given to us, we have richer fare and are more indulged with spiritual comforts than believers were before the bodily presence of the Master had departed. Do your souls hunger tonight? Jesus gives you the bread of heaven. Do you thirst tonight? The waters from the rock cease not to flow.

“Come, make your wants, your burdens known.”

You have but to make known your needs to have them all supplied, Christ waits to be gracious in the midst of this assembly. He is here with His golden hand, opening that hand to supply the wants of every living soul. “Oh!” saith one, “I am poor and needy.” Go on with the quotation. “Yet the Lord thinketh upon me.” “Ah!” says another, “I have besought the Lord thrice to tear away a thorn in the flesh from me.” Remember what He said to Paul, “My grace is sufficient for thee.”

You are not left without the strength you need. The Lord is your Shepherd still. He will provide for you till He leads you through death’s dark valley, and brings you to the shining pastures upon the

hilltops of glory. You are not destitute, you need not beg an asylum from an ungodly world by bowing to its demands, or trusting its vain promises, for Jesus will never leave you, nor forsake you.

The orphan too, is *left without the instruction which is most suitable for a child*. We may say what we will, but there is none so fit to form a child's character as the parent. It is a very sad loss for a child to have lost either father or mother in its early days, for the most skillful preceptor, though he may do much, by the blessing of God very much, is but a stop-gap, and but half makes up for the original ordinance of providence, that the parent's love should fashion the child's mind.

But dear friends, we are not orphans, we who believe in Jesus are not left without an education. Jesus is not here Himself, it is true. I daresay some of you wish you could come on Lord's-days and listen to Him! Would it not be sweet to look up to this pulpit, and see the Crucified One, and to hear Him preach? Ah! so you think, but the apostle says, "Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more."

It is most for your profit that you should receive the Spirit of truth, not through the golden vessel of Christ in His actual presence here, but through the poor earthen vessels of humble servants of God like ourselves. At any rate, whether *we* speak, or an angel from heaven, the speaker matters not, it is the Spirit of God alone that is the power of the Word, and makes that Word become vital and quickening to you.

Now, you have the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit is so given, that there is not a truth which you may not understand. You may be led into the deepest mysteries by His teaching. You may be made to know and to comprehend those knotty points in the Word of God which have hitherto puzzled you. You have but humbly to look up to Jesus, and His Spirit will still teach you.

I tell you, though you are poor and ignorant, and perhaps can scarcely read a word in the Bible, for all that, you may be better instructed in the things of God than doctors of divinity, if you go to the Holy Spirit, and are taught of Him. Those who go only to books and to the letter, and are taught of men, may be fools in the sight of God, but those who go to Jesus, and sit at His feet, and ask to be taught of His Spirit, shall be wise unto salvation. Blessed be God, there are not a few amongst us of this sort. We are not left orphans, we have an Instructor with us still.

There is one point in which the orphan is often sorrowfully reminded of his orphanhood, namely, *in lacking a defender*. It is so natural in a little child, when some big boy molests him, to say, "I'll tell my father!" How often did we use to say so, and how often have we heard from the little ones since, "I'll tell Mother!"

Sometimes, the not being able to do this is a much severer loss than we can guess. Unkind and cruel men have snatched away from orphans the little which a father's love had left behind, and in the court of law, there has been no defender to protect the orphan's goods. Had the father been there, the child would have had its rights, scarcely would any have dared to infringe them, but in the absence of the father, the orphan is eaten up like bread, and the wicked of the earth devour his estate.

In this sense, the saints are not orphans. The devil would rob us of our heritage if he could, but there is an Advocate with the Father who pleads for us. Satan would snatch from us every promise, and tear from us all the comforts of the covenant, but we are not orphans, and when he brings a suit-at-law against us, and thinks that we are the only defendants in the case, he is mistaken, for we have an Advocate on high. Christ comes in and pleads, as the sinner's Friend, for us, and when He pleads at the bar of justice, there is no fear but that His plea will be of effect, and our inheritance shall be safe. He has not left us orphans.

Now I want, without saying many words, to get you who love the Master to feel what a very precious thought this is, that you are not alone in this world, that if you have no earthly friends, if you have none to whom you can take your cares, if you are quite lonely so far as outward friends are concerned, yet Jesus is with you, is really with you, practically with you, able to help you, and ready to do so, and that you have a good and kind Protector close at hand at this present moment, for Christ has said it, "I will not leave you orphans."

II. Secondly, there is A CONSOLATION PROVIDED.

The remedy by which the evil is averted is this, our Lord Jesus said, "*I will come to you.*"

What does this mean? Does it not mean, from the connection, "*I will come to you by my Spirit?*" Beloved, we must not confuse the Persons of the Godhead. The Holy Spirit is not the Son of God, Jesus, the Son of God, is not the Holy Spirit. They are two distinct persons of the one Godhead. But there is such a wonderful unity, and the blessed Spirit acts so marvelously as the Vicar of Christ, that it is quite correct to say that when the Spirit comes, Jesus comes too, and "*I will come to you,*" means—"I, by My Spirit, who shall take My place, and represent Me, I will come to be with you."

See then, Christian, you have the Holy Spirit in you and with you to be the Representative of Christ. Christ is with you now, not in person, but by His Representative—an efficient, almighty, divine, everlasting Representative, who stands for Christ, and is as Christ to you in His presence in your souls.

Because you thus have Christ by His Spirit, you cannot be orphans, for the Spirit of God is always with you. It is a delightful truth that the Spirit of God always dwells in believers—not sometimes, but always. He is not always active in believers and He may be grieved until His sensible presence is altogether withdrawn, but His secret presence is always there.

At no single moment is the Spirit of God wholly gone from a believer. The believer would die spiritually if this could happen, but that cannot be, for Jesus has said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." Even when the believer sins, the Holy Spirit does not utterly depart from him, but is still in him to make him smart for the sin into which he has fallen. The believer's prayers prove that the Holy Spirit is still within him. "*Take not thy Holy Spirit from me,*" was the prayer of a saint who had fallen very foully, but in whom the Spirit of God still kept His residence, notwithstanding all the foulness of his guilt and sin.

But beloved, in addition to this, Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, *makes visits to His people of a peculiar kind.* The Holy Ghost becomes wonderfully active and potent at certain times of refreshing. We are then especially and joyfully sensible of His divine power. His influence streams through every chamber of our nature, and floods our dark soul with His glorious rays, as the sun shining in its strength.

Oh, how delightful this is! Sometimes we have felt this at the Lord's table. My soul pants to sit with you at that table because I do remember many a happy time when the emblems of bread and wine have assisted my faith, and kindled the passions of my soul into a heavenly flame. I am equally sure that at the prayer meeting, under the preaching of the Word, in private meditation, and in searching the Scriptures, we can say that Jesus Christ has come to us. What! Have you no hill Mizar to remember—

***"No Tabor-visits to recount,
When with Him in the holy mount?"***

Oh, yes! some of these blessed seasons have left their impress upon our memories so that amongst our dying thoughts will mingle the remembrance of those blessed seasons when Jesus Christ manifested Himself unto us as He does not unto the world. Oh, to be wrapped in that crimson vest, closely pressed to His open side! Oh, to put our finger into the print of the nails, and to thrust our hand into His side! We know what this means by past experience.

And now, gathering up the few thoughts I have uttered, let me remind you, dear friends, that *every word of the text is instructive*, "*I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you.*" Observe the "*I*" there twice over. "*I will not leave you orphans, father and mother may, but I will not, friends once beloved may turn stony-hearted, but I will not, Judas may play the traitor, and Ahithophel may betray his David, but I will not leave you comfortless.* You have had many disappointments, great heart-breaking sorrows, but *I have never caused you any, I—the faithful and true Witness, the immutable, the unchangeable Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and forever, 'I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.'*"

Catch at that word, "*I,*" and let your souls say, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof, if You had said, '*I will send an angel to you,*' it would have been a great mercy, but what

sayest You, ‘I will come unto you’? If You had bidden some of my brethren come and speak a word of comfort to me, I would have been thankful, but You have put it thus in the first person, ‘I will come unto you.’ O my Lord, what shall I say, what shall I do, but feel a hungering and a thirsting after You which nothing shall satisfy till You shall fulfill Your own Word, ‘I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you?’”

And then notice the persons to whom it is addressed, “I will not leave *you* comfortless: you, Peter, who will deny Me, *You*, Thomas, who will doubt me, I will not leave *you* comfortless.” O you who are so little in Israel that you sometimes think it is a pity that your name is in the church book at all because you feel yourselves to be so worthless, so unworthy, He will not leave *you* comfortless, not even *you*!

“O Lord,” you say, “if You would look after the rest of Your sheep, I would bless You for Your tenderness to them, but *I*—I deserve to be left, if I were forsaken of You, I could not blame You, for I have played the harlot against Your love, but yet You say, ‘I will not leave *you*.’” Heir of heaven, do not lose your part in this promise. I pray you say, “Lord, come unto me, and though Thou dost refresh all my brethren, yet, Lord, refresh me with some of the droppings of Thy love, O Lord, fill the cup *for me*, my thirsty spirit pants for it.

*“I thirst, I faint, I die to prove
The greatness of redeeming love,
The love of Christ to me.”*

Now, Lord, fulfill Your word to Your unworthy handmaid, as I stand, like Hannah, in Your presence. Come unto me, Your servant, unworthy to lift so much as my eyes toward heaven, and only daring to say, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’ Fulfill Your promise even to me, ‘I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.’”

Take whichever of the words you will, and they each one sparkle and flash after this fashion.

Observe too, *the richness and sufficiency of the text*, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.” Jesus does not promise, “I will send you sanctifying grace, or sustaining mercy, or precious mercy,” but He promises you the only thing that will prevent your being orphans, “I will come to you.” Ah, Lord! Your grace is sweet, but You are better. The vine is good, but the clusters are better. It is well enough to have a gift from Your hand, but oh, to touch the hand itself! It is well enough to hear the words of Your lips, but to kiss those lips, as the spouse did in the Song, this is better still.

You know, if there be an orphan child, you cannot prevent its continuing an orphan. You may feel great kindness towards it, supply its wants and do all you possibly can for it, but it is an orphan still. It must get its father and its mother back, or else it will still be an orphan. So, our blessed Lord, knowing this, does not say, “I will do this and that for you,” but “I will come to you.”

Do you not see, dear friends, that there is not only all you can want, but all you think you can want wrapped up in a sentence, “I will come to you”? “It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell,” so that when Christ comes, in Him “all fullness” comes. “In him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily,” so that when Jesus comes, the very Godhead comes to the believer.

*“All my capacious powers can wish
In Thee doth richly meet;”—*

and if Thou shalt come to me, it is better than all the gifts of Thy covenant. If I get Thee, I get all, and more than all, at once.”

Observe, then, the language and the sufficiency of the promise.

But I want you to notice, further, *the continued freshness and force of the promise*. Somebody here owes another person fifty pounds, and he gives him a note of hand, “I promise to pay you fifty pounds.” Very well, the man calls with that note of hand tomorrow, and gets fifty pounds. And what is the good of the note of hand now? Why, it is of no further value, it is discharged. How would you like to have a note of hand which would always stand good? That would be a right royal present. “I promise to pay

evermore, and this bond, though paid a thousand times, shall still hold good." Who would not like to have a bond of that sort? Yet this is the promise which Christ gives you. "I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you."

The first time a sinner looks to Christ, Christ comes to him. And what then? Why, the next minute it is still, "I will come to you." But here is one who has known Christ for fifty years and he has had this promise fulfilled a thousand times a year, is it not done with? Oh, no! there it stands, just as fresh as when Jesus first spoke it, "I will come to you." Then we will treat our Lord in His own fashion, and take Him at His word. We will go to Him as often as ever we can, for we shall never weary Him, and when He has kept His promise most, then is it that we will go to Him and ask Him still to keep it, and after ten thousand proofs of the truth of it, we will only have a greater hungering and thirsting to get it fulfilled again.

This is fit provision for life and for death, "I will come to you." In the last moment, when your pulse beats faintly, and you are just about to pass the curtain, and enter into the invisible world, you may have this upon your lips, and say to your Lord, "My Master, still fulfill to me the word on which You have caused me to hope, 'I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.'"

Let me remind you that *the text is at this moment valid*, and for this I delight in it. "I will not leave you comfortless." That means now, "I will not leave you comfortless *now*." Are you comfortless at this hour? It is your own fault. Jesus Christ does not leave you so, nor make you so. There are rich and precious things in this promise, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you, I will come to you now." It may be a very dull time with you, and you are pining to come nearer to Christ. Very well, then, plead the promise before the Lord. Plead the promise as you sit where you are, "Lord, Thou hast said that Thou wilt come unto me; come unto me tonight."

There are many reasons, believer, why you should plead thus. You want Him, you need Him, you require Him, therefore plead the promise and expect its fulfillment. And oh! when He comes, what a joy it is, He is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber with his garments fragrant with aloes and cassia! How well the oil of joy will perfume your heart! How soon will your sackcloth be put away, and the garments of gladness adorn you! With what joy of heart will your heavy soul begin to sing when Jesus Christ shall whisper that you are His and that He is yours! Come, my Beloved, make no tarrying, be Thou like a roe or a young hart upon the mountains of separation, and prove to me Thy promise true, "I will not leave you orphans: I will come to you."

And now, dear friends, in conclusion, let me remind you that *there are many who have no share in the text*. What can I say to such? From my soul I pity you who do not know what the love of Christ means. Oh, if you could but tell the joy of God's people, you would not rest an hour without it! Remember that if you sincerely desire to find Christ, He is to be found in the way of faith. Trust Him and He is yours. Depend upon the merit of His sacrifice, cast yourselves entirely upon that and you are saved, and Christ is yours.

God grant that we may all break bread in the kingdom above, feast with Jesus and share His glory! We are expecting His second coming. He is coming personally and gloriously. This is the brightest hope of His people. This will be the fullness of their redemption, the time of their resurrection. Anticipate it, beloved, and may God make your souls to sing for joy!

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 15

Many of you know the words of this chapter by heart, you could repeat them without a mistake. May the savor of them abide in your hearts even as the letter of them abides in your memory!

Verse 1. *I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.*

We thank You, O Savior, for this blessed answer to the often-repeated question, "Which is the true church?" Are you one with Christ? Then are you a part of the true vine. If we have but real, vital, personal, saving connection with Christ, to whatever section of the visible church we may belong, we are part of "the true vine." And we are told, in the next sentence, who is the great Caretaker of the church.

Some of us are much occupied in Christ's service, and there is a tendency with all of us to get like Martha, "cumbered" even in serving for Him. We are apt to fancy that the burden of all the churches lies upon our shoulders, but beloved, this is a great mistake. Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman," or vinedresser. He will take the utmost possible care of it, for it is very dear to Him. There is not a branch in that vine which the Father does not love with infinite affection, and as for the majestic stem, even Jesus, He loves Him beyond measure.

2. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away:

This operation is always going on. God is continually taking away from the church, in some way or other, non-fruit-bearers. We know that these do not truly belong to Christ, for fruit must come from vital union to Him, but it is a trial to the church to have non-fruit-bearing branches. These are taken away, sometimes by death, sometimes by judgment, sometimes by the open discovery of their secret sin, the culmination of their backsliding in overt acts of transgression. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away," but side by side with this action another process is constantly going on—

2. And every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

Is this, then, dear friend, one reason why you are being chastened—because you are a fruit-bearing branch? If you bore no fruit, you would be left unpruned, because the knife would do its sterner work upon you by taking you altogether away. If you really do bring forth fruit to God, you must expect to have trial, trouble, affliction, and that full often.

3. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

That was a "word" which had sorely grieved them, and cut them to the quick, so that the Savior had to say to them, more than once, "Let not your heart be troubled." (See the first, and the twenty-seventh, verses of the preceding chapter). They had felt the sharp edge of the pruning knife, so Jesus said to them, "Now ye are clean (purged or pruned) through the word which I have spoken unto you."

4. Abide in me, and I in you.

The main thing is not restless activity, running here and there, and doing this and that, and the other thing, it is abiding in Christ, persevering, constantly cleaving to Christ by virtue of a vital union with Him, "Abide in me, and I in you."

4. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

You may hurry, and flurry, and worry, but you will lose by it. Keep close to Christ. Never let your heart be dissociated from intimate communion with Him. So shall you bring forth fruit, but not else.

5-6. I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered: and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

The vine is of use for nothing but fruit-bearing, and if it does not bear fruit, it is good for nothing except to be burned. In the social economy of life, a man may be of some use however bad he may be, but a man who is in the nominal church of Christ, and yet does not bring forth fruit unto God, is of no use whatsoever. There is nothing to the done with him but to gather him up with the sere autumn leaves and the decaying stalks of vegetation, to be burned in the corner outside the wall.

How trying is the smoke that comes from such a burning as that! We pastors sometimes get it into our eyes, and it fills them with bitter tears. I know of nothing that is more grievous to us than this putting out of the unworthy, this casting the fruitless vine branches into the fire that they may be burned.

7. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you,—

You see that doctrinal vitality is necessary to true union to Christ. Some, in these days, talk about a spiritual attachment to the person of Christ, while they shoot their envenomed darts against the dogmas of Christ, but that will not do. “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you”—My words of doctrine, precept, or promise, then”—

7. *Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*

This is the secret of successful prayer. Christ listens to your words because you listen to His words. If you are conformed to His will, He will grant you your will. Disobedient children, when they pray, may expect to get the rod for an answer. In true kindness, God may refuse to listen to them until they are willing to listen to Him.

8. *Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit;*

What a wonderful vine that must be whose branches glorify God! Who ever heard of such a thing? The very branches do this, and they do it by bearing fruit. How this ought to excite us to desire to bear Christian graces, and to do Christian service, and to endure with resignation the Lord’s will, for those are the clusters that hang upon this vine.

8. *So shall ye be my disciples.*

For Christ is not merely a fruit-bearer, but a bearer of much fruit. If we are to be Christ’s disciples indeed, we must not be content with doing something for Him, but we must do everything that is possible to us, and God can strengthen us till we shall get beyond our natural possibilities into a still loftier realm.

9. *As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.*

As truly as the Father loves the Son, so truly does Jesus love us, nay, more than that, in the same manner as the Father loved the Son—that is, without beginning, without cessation, without change, without end, without measure—so does Jesus love us. There are many great texts in the Bible, but I have often questioned whether there is a bigger text than this—a vaster abyss of meaning than can be found in these few words, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you.”

“Continue ye in my love.” Recognize it, enjoy it, walk in consistency with it, reflect it, “Continue ye in my love.”

10. *If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.*

I said just now that the doctrinal words of Christ were to be regarded by us. So, dearly beloved, the precepts or commands of God must ever be regarded. It is an idle tale for men to talk of a mystical, visionary love to Christ which does not result in obedience to His will. We must keep His commandments, or we cannot truly say to Him, “Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.”

11. *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

Good children are truly happy when their parents are happy in them. When they, through the good teaching and example of their parents, bring honor and joy to their parents, then they are sure to be themselves joyful. Oh, that we might so live that Christ’s joy might abide in us, for then our joy would be full.

12. *This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.*

Are you doing this, brethren and sisters in Christ, really loving one another? Do you ever pick holes in each other’s character? Do you never judge a fellow Christian harshly? If you do these things, chide yourself, and cease from this evil habit at once, for Your Lord says to you, “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.”

13. *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.*

“Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.’ I lift you above the rank of servant and make you My table companions, privileged to sit at the table with Me in communion. I put you down on

My list of associates and familiars, with whom I take sweet counsel, and in company with whom I walk to the house of God. ‘Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.’”

This condition applies to the whole range of Christ’s commands. We are not to omit any one of them, nor to make a little nick in our conscience as some do, nor to neglect what seems to be a comparatively small duty, for neglected duties, even of the lesser kind, often set upon us as little stones in a boot do upon a traveler. They lame him, they may not prevent him from travelling, but they mar his comfort on the road. Be scrupulous, brethren, lest, through the neglect of what some regard as scruples, you should bring upon yourselves great sorrows.

14-16. *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,—*

“That is where the love began—not with you, but with Me.”

16. *And ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain:*

There are some people who are very fond of quoting the first part of this verse, they are very glad to hear a sermon upon the free, sovereign grace of God. They cannot too often repeat the words, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,” but they do not talk so much about the next clause, “and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain.” Let us accept all God’s words as He has given them to us, and keep up the due proportion of the whole.

Note that Christ is not speaking here of spasmodic piety, the religion that can only be kept up by popular preaching, and great meetings, and much excitement, and all that sort of thing, but of the religion of principle that bears its clusters tomorrow as well as today, and even months and years hence—the religion that bears its fruit every month, and the leaf whereof doth not wither. May we be such branches in the true vine that our fruit shall thus remain.

16. *That whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*

For, where the fruit remains, power in prayer will remain. If we are constantly living unto God, we shall find ourselves privileged to have the ear of God, and when we pray to Him, He will grant us the desire of our hearts.

17. *These things I command you, that ye love one another.*

Our Lord repeated the command, for He knew how prone even His disciples would be to disobey it.

18. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.*

It is no new thing for the ungodly to hate the godly, so let us not be surprised if that is our portion.

19-20. *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.*

It ought to be quite sufficient for the servant if he is treated as his Lord was, what higher honor than that could he wish to have?

21. *But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not him that sent me.*

They professed to know God, and some of them even thought that they were rendering acceptable service to God when they rejected His Son, whom He had sent to them.

22-24. *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father.*

Our Lord did not mean that they would have been sinless if He had not come to them, but that His coming, and their rejection of Him, had enormously increased and intensified their sinfulness.

25. *But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.*

They fulfilled what had been written long before, even as they afterwards did when they put Christ to death.

26-27. *But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*

The witness of the Spirit of truth still continues, and Christ's disciples are still privileged to be co-witnesses even with the Holy Spirit Himself, let us take care to avail ourselves of this privilege whenever we can.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.